

CITY AS AGENT FOR ARTS SPACE

Cities possess a full array of tools and instruments to shape the cultural economy than do other levels of government: regulatory tools such as land use and redevelopment planning; ownership of land and buildings; and financial resources such as dedicated taxes and community and economic development funds.

A complex interrelationship of city departments and agencies is involved in supporting the arts: arts and cultural affairs, planning, economic development, parks and recreation, public works, and public safety.

In Minneapolis, the transfer of development rights (TDR) program is specifically focused on preserving and rehabilitating historic structures in the downtown area. Undeveloped floor area that contains historic structures is transferred to other lots.

In Boston, increased floor area ratio (FAR) is permitted for substantially rehabilitated theatres and non-profit cultural uses.

CASE STUDY: ARTS SPACE INCENTIVES FOR SOUTH LAKE UNION, SEATTLE

“As redevelopment occurs, the diversity that art brings to a neighborhood is lost when the cost of real estate increases to the point where artists are forced to seek new space in other neighborhoods.”

This study looks at incentives that could be used to make some arts spaces a permanent part of a neighborhood.

Seattle and other cities provide incentives to developers in order to achieve desired outcomes, such as affordable housing. For Seattle, three applications are outlined:

- Developer “bonus” for integrating arts space within a development
- Transfer of development rights for off-site arts space.
- Development rights “banking,” where a number of projects could share in the development rights, which are held until purchased.

These three applications would all allow developers to increase the size of the property they wish to develop by providing public benefit space, in this case for arts uses. Increased density is used on-site in the case of bonuses, or it can be transferred offsite.